

Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board Meetings

Minutes

September 8, 2008

Members: Alan Bowser, Darian Unger, Tiffany Graham-Golden, Lucinda Lessley, Mark Woodard, Megan Moriarty, Kathy Stevens, Mitch Warren, Deborah Linn, and Victor Weissberg
Debbie Spielberg

Members Absent: Marilyn Seitz, Cassandra Ford, Jerry Yokoyama, Fran Rothstein, Phil Olivetti, Mary Pat Spon and Evan Glass

Call to Order and Introduction:

Darian Unger, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. members and attendees introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes: The Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board approved the July 14, 2008 minutes.

Community Comments

Becky Reeve, member of the Friends of the Silver Spring Library commented that they are concerned about the Charrettes. The charrettes only announced at the last couple of meetings, why the design charrettes are being held in Long Branch and not the Silver Spring Library. We are not getting any answers on the space requirements of the library. We don't know who is in charge of the change in Program of Requirements (POR) and we have made it very clear that the space planned for the library is too small and suddenly the Regional Center is in charge of the development of this plot of land. I distributed the footprint for the purple line and it is clear that it will go right through where the library should be and it has totally lost the whole appeal that this land was required for the library, the library is a priority and we deserve a library that is large enough for our own needs and it is not. We have no sense of response on this and the issue here.

Chairs Report

Darian Unger reported that:

- Thanks to Kathy Stevens for chairing the last meeting. Since that time we almost got all the funding for the Civic Building and Transit Center. I met with County Councilmember's in advance to make them aware of issues coming up in Silver Spring and between our group and the Urban District we presented a united front and ended up with \$2.5 million dollars more for the Civic Building and monies for the Transit Center. Thanks to all on these efforts.
- I e-mailed Board members regarding meetings that I am having with the various Councilmember's and invited members to attend these meetings. I will be meeting with Councilmember Duchy Trachtenberg on September 11, at 4:15 p.m. to discuss a series of Silver Spring concerns and members are more than welcome to come. I will continue doing this and I am surprised in meeting with Councilmember's how unaware many of them are on some of the issues we deal with all the time. The more we can keep them up-to-date on issues whether it is pedestrian safety, funding issue or neighborhoods issue the

more we can get their attention before something becomes critical and the easier it will be to have their support when we need it.

- I have been attending the other CAB meetings to see a) where we can push together on issues; b) to see what they do that is different from our Board and how they handle their committees. We have been having committee attendance issues with people coming to the full Board but not the committee meetings so I have been getting ideas on how they handle it and I will try implementing some of these ideas at this meeting.

Directors Reports:

Gary Stith reported:

- Silver Spring 5th Annual Jazz Festival, September 13, 2:00-10:30 p.m., admission is free and is being held at a new site behind 8601 Georgia Avenue (near the corner of Colesville & Georgia). The headliner is Mingus Big Band.
- Magical Montgomery, September 27, 1-7 pm., admission is free and being held at the corner of Fenton Street and Ellsworth Drive in downtown Silver Spring. We help with this event and it is put on by the Montgomery County Arts and Humanities Council and is a showcase for all arts organizations and artist that want to participate in this event. Suzan Jenkins is the new CEO for the Arts and Humanities Council.
- The Purple Line Draft Environmental Impact Statement is supposed to come out at the end of September and copies will be available through the Library and the Regional Center. There will be a series of public hearings and the one in Silver Spring should take place in early November but has not been confirmed but as soon as we receive confirmation our office will send out a broadcast announcement.

Civic Building Update

- The groundbreaking ceremony for Veterans Plaza/Civic Building project in downtown Silver Spring is on Wednesday, September 10, 2008 at 10:30 a.m. The project construction site is at the Corner of Ellsworth Dr. and Fenton Street. When construction is completed the 1.5 acre site will contain the new 42,000 square-foot Civic Building that will be fronted by the three-quarter acre Veterans Plaza, featuring a brick surface surrounded by grass and trees. It will be the site of a memorial to veterans of all wars and host year-round activities concerts, markets, festivals and be converted to an ice rink from November through March. Entry to the groundbreaking site will be down the steps leading from the parking lot behind Whole Foods and we recommend you park at Town Square garage. This project is scheduled for completion late fall 2009. I spoke to the contractor and told him that it would be a tragedy if we were not able to dedicate the Veteran Plaza on Veteran Day in 2009.
- It was suggested that we get youth involved in doing mural like things that we can put inside the construction of the Civic Building to make it more attractive. We are going to hold this event on Saturday, September 20 11-4p.m. We are working with Arts on the Block, Create Art and Pyramid Atlantic who are actually going to manage this.

Library Update

- The Library site belongs to the County at Wayne Avenue from the Moose Lodge down to the corner of Fenton Street down to Bonifant including the site where there use to be an apartment building which was demolished and is now a grassy area. Part of the process for moving forward with design is that the Library Department goes through the process of updating the Program of Requirements (POR). When a Capital Project is put together the County does a POR describing everything in the project room by room, the function of the room, what needs to be in the room and adjacency. The purpose of this document is to show the designers what they are going to design and it gives the County the opportunity to do a rough estimate of cost and put a place holder for that project in the Capital Budget. The first step when we are ready to start designs is to test the POR making sure it still reflects what the community feels it needs and address changes that might need to be made in updating the POR. The Department of Libraries has put together a schedule of meetings, July 15, August 23 and September 21. At the September 21 meeting we are talking about presenting an overview of what has come out of the previous two meetings and maybe giving a preliminary look at the POR. They have started working on the POR based on the comments from the first two meetings. In addition we had a meeting with teenagers on August 23, at the Silver Spring Library and another meeting is scheduled tomorrow with teenagers at Blair High School for their input on what they feel should be in the new library. We have had great participation and comments from the community at all meetings and their input will help. The results will be put into an updated POR which will be presented to the community and we will get comments back on that. They will not do the update until they have done all these meetings and this is the process. Lukemire Associates was hired to do the project and they have done other libraries in Montgomery County. They may have a preliminary outline of the updated POR at the meeting on September 21, and it needs to be done quickly because we need that for input into the Design Charrette process. The first meeting of the Design Charrette is on September 23, 7-9, Round House Education Center, 925 Wayne Avenue, topic of discussion is the site analysis and constraints; community concerns for development of the site. The second meeting is on October 7, 6:30-9pm, Long Branch Community Center, 8700, Piney Branch Road and at this design meeting we would take that information and what comes out of the POR update and start presenting design concepts and getting feedback and brainstorming from the community about the design concept. The third design meeting is on October 21, 6:30-9pm, Long Branch Community Center, 8700, Piney Branch Road to review and critique conceptual designs. These are sequential meetings where we will be going through a process and it would be helpful and we encourage participation in as many of the meetings possible. The architect stated they thought they could incorporate community comments and come up with better design concepts if they had two weeks between meetings to work through some ideas and concepts.
- The space in the Silver Spring Library is not big enough to properly conduct the design charrettes if we get a large participation and other facilities in Silver Spring are either too small, or booked by other organizations. We have done the best we can to move the design charrettes forward and Long Branch Community Center is located in the Silver Spring area and large enough to accommodate spreading out and the number of people

we expect. We could look at doing another date but when we have weekend meetings the attendance is not really that great.

- On Fenton there is a hair braiding business, auto repair on the corner and the Moose Lodge we are working with all three and it will take time and we will be a year in design and it is not like construction will start tomorrow. The real estate business moved out and because of break-ins I asked General Services to demolish the building. The Urban District is using the garage for temporary storage.
- Once we complete the Design Charrettes there will be a presentation on October 16 to update the HHS Committee of County Council on the process and what type of schedule we are looking at. We will present to the County Executive first the design options that have come out of the charrette process than meet with the HHS Committee to review
- If you have concerns about how a purple line goes through the site or a station fits in conjunction with the library come to the design charettees. Council wants us to review the site for the library which is the primary use. We are using housing initiative funds so we are replacing housing that existed on the lot and the zoning allows for more than a library and you could do about 180,000 square feet and the library will take 40,000 to 50,000 square feet. There is the library, housing, the purple line if that alignment is selected, station for purple line, retail to help activate the site and arts uses. The idea for housing was to at least replace 32 units but if it is 180,000 square feet of development and we use 80,000 between the other uses that leaves 100,000 square feet left and we could do 1,000 square feet per unit which would come out to 100 housing units. There where 32 units in the building housing initiative funds and economically from the management point of view a 32 unit complex would not be very sufficient. The County Executive would like to see 30% MPDU's, 30% Workforce housing and 40% market rate housing.

Darian Unger stated Gary Stith is representing the Regional Center, County Executive and Library Department. To date the Board has echoed many but not all of the concerns of the various Silver Spring Library groups, Friends of the Silver Spring Library. Community for New Silver Spring Library and Silver Spring Library Advisory Committee and the Board agreed with them on many of their issues. Fundamentally we have been trying to facilitate more community input in the process. We where pushing the Library Department to include teen meetings and there has been one and another tomorrow and Alan, Megan, Kathy and I have actually gone to some of these meeting to contribute to the POR process and to date this is pretty much the Boards contribute.

Gary Stith stated it is important that the community attend the Design Charrettes and give input but also to hear how these things are thought through and why certain things work and other don't. Once the charrettes are done the next step is to take the options developed to the County Executive and than to County Council HHS Committee that oversees library projects and based on that we will make recommendations about which options in terms of site layout we can move forward on the design of the library. There will be another process on how they design it, how it is laid out, how it looks and the community will be involved but this is a separate process after the design option. Council did not make a schedule but we have to go every quarter and make a presentation on our progress to them and we are trying to keep this process moving.

Mark Woodward suggested that the Rockville Library looked like a great model not saying we should copy Rockville but whatever can be taken from that would be great.

Gary Stith stated the Silver Spring Library is a mixed-use project. The Rockville Library has county functions inside and the rest of the things around that area are part of the Town Center Development and there is no connection between the library and the arts activity at all and this is a missed opportunity. People have suggested that the Silver Spring Library needs an arts theme because we are in an Arts and Entertainment District so one option is to have an arts use and they could even share space and run a gallery as a part of the library.

Darian Unger stated there have been a lot of community meetings but what happens once all this input has been assessed and processed what will the POR state at the end. The concern from the community is if this does not come out right do we stop and wait or wait until another month to be able to react and if everything works out that's great and part of this depends on your faith and ability of the Library Department translating all these community needs into some sort of reasonable design.

Gary Stith stated the total site is about 60,000 square feet and we are talking about at least a two level library. The Fenton Village Overlay Zone allows along Fenton Street a limit of 60 feet and if you did retail you will want a higher ceiling level so 20 feet on the first floor and you could have four floors above that but at least 3. There was a ZTA passed that would allow for as much as 110 feet to accommodate the workforce housing. Once the design option is selected we will be ready to move forward on the design of the library element and there has been talk of everything being in one building and the Executive Branch thinks that's problematic in terms of the library moving forward on a faster track because if it is all in one building you have to design and construct the entire thing altogether. You need a private developer involved and go through that process, go through optional method review which takes a significant amount of time versus Mandatory Referral for just the library and these are issues that need to be reviewed in terms of the design and how the design is affect will determine what process you go through.

Megan Moriarty asked if someone is interested in giving input on programming at the library or library space for youth are these charrettes something where that input would be helpful.

Gary Stith responded the Design Charrettes are for the site plan. It is the POR process where you can make your suggestions. If you can not attend the meetings you can go online to the Silver Spring library site, information that came out of the meetings has been posted. The Library Department website has a place for you to comment by e-mail. The Design Charrettes will discuss the uses on the site and how they all fit together. Things that are inside the library will not be a part of these discussions because that is coming out of the POR and that will determine how big the library will be and the input the designers have to use to move forward on the site plan. There will be a public process for the design of the library later. I would like this process to start right after the first of the year.

Darian Unger stated he mentioned the concerns the Board had about community input and the size of library doing a meeting with Councilmember Leventhal, Head of the HHS Committee and he is very receptive to our concerns but again we are waiting to see what happens with the

POR. The Library Department has been neutrally resistant to change. I've been to meeting with Parker Hamilton, Director, Libraries and I think it is fair to characterize that there is some resistance to seeing it grow because they are under pressure from the County Executive so they are feeling the forces of compromise that there has to be space for housing.

Kathy Stevens stated that we have had numerous conversations about figuring out what is part of the POR and what is part of the Design Charette and hopes whomever is facilitating the charettes and the suggested changes to the POR will realize as the facilitator how important it is to address the issues head on, talk about what has come and publicize it well ahead of time so people can better understand the processes. The more information and better communication around it will help these meetings move along because people will come to these meetings without that clarity in mind. Putting aside 10 to 15 minutes to discuss what is going to be in the library because otherwise you are in a vacuum and people are going to feel very frustrated before the meeting even starts.

Gary Stith responded that Rita Gale, Department of Public Libraries has facilitated the POR meetings and done an excellent job in explaining what the Program of Requirement is and helping people go through the process.

Darian Unger commented there are three major public projects happening in downtown Silver Spring, the library, Transit Center and Civic Building and Veterans Plaza.

Gary Stith stated that the contract on construction of the new Transit Center has been signed and we have to remove all the buses off the site. All the buses are going to be moved to shelters, installed along Wayne Avenue, Dixon Avenue and Bonifant Street. Each shelter will have a sign that will show where the different bus routes are for WMATA, Metro buses, Ride-On buses, VanGo, Shuttles for University of Maryland and Montgomery College. The Commuter Express Store in downtown Silver Spring has relocated to a new location close to the Silver Spring Metro Station. The Commuter Express Store also has a new name, TRiPS. The new store is now at 8413 Ramsey Avenue. The new phone number for the store is 240.773.8747 (TRiPS). We will have two Urban District staff on-site one responsible for keeping the site clean and the other will be assigned for informational purposes. The first couple of weeks we will have Transit Services personnel and quiet a few of the Urban District staff on site to help people adjust. 80,000 copies of a pamphlet will be printed and distributed on the buses and metro station two weeks prior to September 28. The Operation Groups involves, Police, Fire, Highway Services, all the transit users and operators including MARC meeting weekly until this starts to make sure all basis are covered and the transition is as smooth as possible. The jug-handle which is currently two-way traffic for buses will become one-way only north bound between Wayne and Colesville and after the transit center is finished the jug-handle will be eliminated and converted into a Park which Park and Planning has named after Gene Lynch. The project will take two years to construct and Kiss-n-Ride is located in the Garage 55, handicap parking is available and the routes are marked for both Metro and the MARC. In the initial stages it will cut across the site and you will have to walk between the two fences. Once they start moving dirt they will have a sheltered walkway. On Bonifant you will have to walk to Wayne Avenue come in at a point doing the construction and a bike path is being built and it will be opened to pedestrians so you can come down Bonifant. We did get the top level of escalator banks.

Darian Unger thanks to everyone especially to Kathy Stevens. These are things we were fighting to get back in and considered essential elements and we got them.

Gary Stith stated the only thing not put back in was Park and Planning wanted a building toward the front for Transit Services and Police but they moved it back in with the inter-city greyhound bus station. There is a canopy over the entrance and other cosmetic things were included and the escalator. If during the process you see things that would assist us in making this work better please contact me. There will be a Police Officer assigned to the area from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. There will be two crossing guards during morning and evening rush hours to assist pedestrian in getting where they want to go and we think they will be at Ramsey and Wayne but once we see where the volumes of pedestrian seem to be going we may end up moving them. The groundbreaking for the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit Center is on Friday, September 26, 2008 at 12:30 p.m. at the cul-de-sac of Bonifant Street, west of Georgia Avenue, in Silver Spring. We have Urban District personnel who speak Spanish and French other than that we don't have any specific language staff directly available and I can not guarantee that there will always be a multi-lingual person there. The brochure will be printed in English and Spanish.

Neighborhoods Committee

Alan Bowser reported that:

- The notes start on page 14. We were visited by Assistant Chief Scott Graham, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services who briefed the committee on Montgomery County Emergency Vehicle Transport Fees which is included in the notes. We voted to support a proposal to oppose the emergency medical services without any discussion or deliberation by this Board. In my opinion it was a rush to judgment and I suggest to the Board when the County Executive puts forward a proposal which is obviously important to the Administration that we have some deliberation and with this we did not have any serious discussion about the emergency medical services. I further add this proposal for this particular subject was recommended by Darian Unger which is a conflict of interest and needed to be disclosed. People had concerns about the emergency transport fee and whether it would result in a reduction in service and increase insurance premiums. Going forward I think the Board needs to have a more robust discussion on the pros and cons of some things especially when it is presented by the County Executive and my feeling is that if we took the vote over again it would not have been unanimous.
- There is a communication from Commander Johnson about public safety in Silver Spring. Some of the neighborhoods adjacent to downtown Silver Spring have been concerned about vandalism, robberies and burglaries. We have engaged Commander Johnson, 3rd District Silver Spring and he responded with a very thoughtful memorandum on how the police are trying to respond to community concerns. I spoke with Commander Johnson and I am convinced that they are doing everything they can with the resources they have to protect the community to maintain public order.
- At last Thursday meeting of the Planning Board they approved Home Properties proposal for the north parcel of the Falkland which would demolish the garden apartments and construct a large mix-use project. I am asking people to pay close attention to the design as it goes forward and I've seen that Home Properties proposal for the north parcel of the

Falkland is not the proposal we saw at CED Committee a couple of months ago with the green space.

Gary Stith commented the Planning Board did not approve the Home Properties project but decided not to designate the north parcel as being historic. The new concept going around was developed by the Planning staff as a recommended alternative to how that area should be designed. The thing on some of the blog sites was done by the Planning staff and not Home Properties.

- It is my understanding that there is a proposal to blend the Transportation and Pedestrian Safety Committee and Neighborhoods Committee going forward until they can find additional people to lead the Transportation and Pedestrian Safety Committee so if there is anyone that would like to volunteer it would be helpful and a good idea.

Next meeting of Neighborhoods Committee, September 15, 2008 and the two major agenda items are Pedestrian Safety Initiative and County Executive Code Enforcement Task Force.

Deborah Linn stated that the entire Board had gone on record as being opposed to the Emergency Fees and we had a discussion as to whether we need to bring another letter to the Board and we had already sent a letter and on record as opposing emergency fees and did not see it as change position but reiterated our position of being opposed

Alan Bowser responded that the vote was rushed because we wanted to testify before Council and I did not see the pros or cons presented by the County Executive as well as the Volunteer Fire Department. I listen to the testimony before Council and heard different points of view and thought that the professional firefighters and rescue people had good point from Prince Georges and Montgomery County and I don't think this was well reflected in the discussion held by this Board.

Darian Unger stated that sometime we operate quickly as in this case because the operating budget was being decided the next week and we unanimously voted to oppose the emergency fees. This did not go through Committee but as a result we knew we needed a super majority.

Commercial Economic Committee

Deborah Linn reported that:

- Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board and CED Committee are sponsoring a Forum on Fenton Village, October 15, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. at the Nora School, 955 Sligo Ave., Silver Spring. The purpose is to discuss what Fenton Village is, the Planning Board named it Fenton Village and we did an informal survey and the first question was how often do you come to Fenton Village and the response was where is Fenton Village. Fenton Village was made up by Planning and they call it an urban village. The purpose of this is to start and develop the concept of what an urban village is and what we want to see in our urban village. The first meeting is designed to be informational only, Planning is invited and they will show the density, where and what the planned development are, input from two

community groups that have been involved in the project intended to go on now, input from someone representing business to discuss businesses concerns and talk generally about what we think urban village should be. The follow-up will be the following Saturday morning 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. and we will do a walking tour of Fenton Village led by Gary Stith and Jerry McCoy. We will have a follow-up meeting in CED to sort of develop concepts and to keep an eye on what is actual going on there. We would appreciate it if all would attend. In the first meeting the Planning Staff is doing a lot of presenting. We want to find out who goes to Fenton Village and why.

Darian Unger stated one of the things the Board is trying to do is facilitate community input and this forum will hopefully be a way to do that. The point of the forum is so everybody can have a good starting base and people can learn about Fenton Village but we are trying to get information in the form of these surveys. From a Board perspective this is a different way of doing Committee meetings because our committee meetings are not always successful and at times they are great and we get a lot of participation from community but not from the Board and other times we have a few Board members and not many from anywhere else so the idea is to really have the community involved in it. This Forum on October 15 will replace the regular October CED committee meeting because we are all focusing on the Forum.

Transportation and Pedestrian Safety Committee

Darian Unger reported that the Committee did not have a meeting however, we had a pedestrian death on Georgia Avenue and are waiting on details from the Police. This re-emphasis's that this is an important subject in our neighborhood. I think it stands in contrast to what we've got in Transportation and Pedestrian Safety Committee which is actually very little. I am trying to step down as Chair of this Committee but we don't have anyone volunteering to step-in so until that happens I talked with Megan at the Executive Committee meeting about having a joint meeting in order to continue Transportation and Pedestrian Safety as an issue that we deal with as a group. There was a pedestrian death, serious concerns about the propose new road code that could involve speed limits that are higher than some people want in urban areas and several bike lanes outstanding. If anyone is interested in handling some of these important transportation issues in our neighborhoods please let me know because otherwise we will continue to fold them into another meeting. I think we should be better than this and that the community deserves a dedicated Transportation and Pedestrian Safety Committee dealing with these issues on a monthly basis and these are all worthy areas and if there are ways you would like to be involved please let me know.

Meeting adjourned 8:50 p.m.

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